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CHAL-0276
Copy 8 of 8.

1 August 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Trip Report - Visit to Detachment C, 26-31 July 1958,
by [REDACTED]

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1. On arrival at Detachment C, [REDACTED] were briefed concerning the object of the trip and given information on current projects. After discussion, detailed information for a staff meeting was agreed and at this general meeting the following points were covered:

a. General congratulations with regard to the success of the southern missions.

b. Advice that project plans are for a continuation of the units through December 1959.

c. Information concerning the high level panel which was meeting at present to review project progress to date and future possibilities. I advised that there were a number of promising proposals but that to pass any specific ones on at this time would be to prejudge the panel's work.

d. Current Detachment # operations were covered in general as well as [REDACTED]

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e. The two accidents at [REDACTED] were covered and special emphasis was placed upon certain deficiencies in the quality of day-to-day maintenance. The effort was made here to impress each section head with the need for 100% reliability across the board as well as to encourage individual thinking toward product improvement in each phase of work contributing to the mission.

f. All were advised that aircraft which showed evidence of corrosion were being painted for two purposes, primarily for anti-corrosion, and secondarily to provide camouflage.

g. Security, in light of the C-113 incident, was carefully emphasized.

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h. All were advised that [REDACTED] and I would be available for individual discussions at any time during the period of our stay.

SECRET

-2-

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1. [REDACTED] covered Air Force promotion cycles.

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2. At a later meeting with the pilots, [REDACTED] and the Operations Officer, they were briefed on all of the above subjects. Additionally the following subjects were covered:

Decorations

Over-all activities at Detachment B

Air Force integration program

Policy with regard to ejection seats

The pilots requested that all wires and gadgets hanging from the aircraft be held to a minimum. They were keenly interested in future training for any follow-on vehicles. My impression after watching three sorties from ops and maintenance preparations through pre-breathing and take-off are as follows:

a. All pilots are eager and enthusiastic. There were many queries with regard to overflight possibilities. All pilots were highly professional in their approach and the three I observed operating the aircraft demonstrated a high level of competence.

b. Relationships between the pilots, Operations, [REDACTED] and all support elements were marked by an unusually high degree of mutual confidence. The care and precision with which the pilots pre-flight the aircraft and assist one another in completing check-lists and pre-take-off requirements, as well as monitoring the entire flight, were outstanding. In all regards this portion of the operations appeared to be on a very high plane.

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3. Special Discussions

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a. Emergency War Plan. The status of project EMP was covered with [REDACTED]. They were in hearty accord with the steps recently taken by the project and volunteered to work out an operations plan in support of the EMP. They advised that at this time other personnel within the unit remained unwitting and that only those necessary to the execution of an operations plan would be advised at such time as the operations plan was completed. I agreed with their reasoning since discussion of an EMP at a time when critical events are occurring in the Middle East might cause unnecessary anxiety on the part of personnel, particularly civilian.

b. Personnel. Both individuals were in general satisfied with personnel and felt that a period of accommodation had now been completed and that their people at present are working well as a team. Neither felt that the situation had been good in the early months of this year.

SECRET

SECRET

-3-

c. Security. In light of the C-118 incident, [REDACTED] stated that a personal interview has been arranged with each member of the unit to ensure that address books, unnecessary material in wallets, and security practices of individuals in general were tightened up. This systematic approach to the problem seemed wise and [REDACTED] Detachment Security Officer, said that the program was well underway. Security consciousness was evident throughout each activity. It was obvious that the many Navy and Marine personnel on the station were under strict orders to avoid the project area and to generally ignore the operation. There were approximately [REDACTED] on the station at all times. These were of many sorts but in general were various models of jet fighters, Marine and carrier-based. Take-offs and landings of project aircraft occasioned no great interest among station personnel and timing arrangements for launching and recovery were efficient, safe, and rapid. At no time was the runway closed longer than 3 to 4 minutes.

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d. General. I discussed with [REDACTED] the need for progressive quality improvement with regard to mission take. I advised them of improvement at Detachment B which seemed to be related to a most useful and helpful visit from [REDACTED] and that we planned to have [REDACTED] work with Detachment C to further improve their product.

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[REDACTED] reviewed the desirability of replacing bulky wooden boxes with steel boxes one-half the size to accommodate B system film. This seemed to me to be an easier and more economical method of moving film. I will review this with material to determine the feasibility of replacement.

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4. Inspection by Sections.

a. General. The area around the hangar used by the project was by far the outstanding work area on the base. Industrial house-keeping with regard to internal shop and hangar area were outstanding. Mission planning facilities are adequate and each mission is subject to three separate checks by different personnel to guard against error.

b. Supply and FAX. Supplies and FAX appeared to be more than adequate. Condition of the FAX and items within the FAX were good. Random requests for listed items resulted in prompt location and delivery. During discussion of the large number of items carried, it was pointed out that the distance and time for delivery from depot warrants carrying items even though record of usage is infrequent. Binning, tagging and listing were orderly and personnel appeared to be competent.

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-4-

3. Security. The area of security received continuing, aggressive attention from all concerned. [REDACTED] reviewed with [REDACTED] a few personnel problems in this area.

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4. Finance (local). Everyone in the unit seems to be extremely economy conscious and every effort is made by all sections to avoid unnecessary purchases and any costs not directly related to and essential for operations.

5. Communications. A healthy relationship exists between Commo and all other sections at this time. [REDACTED] have arranged a number of housing moves designed to meet the desire of the Commo people to live in proximity of one another, which eases their problems with regard to shift work.

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5. Deficiencies. Deficiencies noted were minor in nature and corrected prior to the time of my departure from the station. Items over which the unit has no control but which require action are:

a. I observed a test of water survival equipment and consider it unsatisfactory. The unit and pilots are of the same opinion. I asked [REDACTED] to undertake a realistic test program to determine quicker and easier methods of getting out of the exterior flying suit, parachute, boots, etc. The principal difficulty has to do with techniques. I believe that with a small test program these techniques can be progressively improved, and I asked that headquarters be kept informed on this.

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b. [REDACTED] felt that any evacuation plan which included airlift was unrealistic. He proposed to investigate small fields which might be available for emergency evacuation and would plan to earmark vehicles to move in advance by road to a small airfield with equipment necessary to launch sorties while flying the aircraft out. I suggested that he develop the plan and forward it to headquarters after local coordination.

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c. The unit has not yet seen the results of Missions #6011 and #6012 and requested that these be sent.

d. All contractor personnel need to know contractor intentions as early as possible. At this time it appears that approximately 50% of the contractor personnel would extend if contract terms remain approximately the same. [REDACTED] felt that new contracts should leave some room for local arrangements between the unit commander and the contractor personnel, particularly with regard to days off and R&R. For example, he advised that during the southern operation contractor personnel would have been happy to take their

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-5-

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days off at [REDACTED] rather than go through a [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. In some cases of course personnel would have wanted to go back to [REDACTED] to visit their families. However, a good deal of time and man hours could have been saved with complete agreement of all concerned had some latitude been permitted.

6. General Observations. The unit appears to be about at the peak of its capability operationally. Major areas for improvement seem to be in the camera equipment and refinements in the use of this equipment to ensure progressive product improvement. The teamwork and ease of unit operation displayed during sorties launched indicated that personnel have become accustomed to working with one another closely and competently. Although firm controls are much in evidence during all phases of the operations observed, little or no pressure was exerted on any section or individual. Discipline, morale and self-confidence were higher than in most units I have observed.

All personnel seemed to be enjoying their stay [REDACTED] and I believe most of the married personnel would be willing to extend particularly those families living on base where every support and convenience are provided by Agency and [REDACTED] support activities.

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After observing the hazardous conditions on [REDACTED] roads, I would strongly recommend against occupying housing more than 20 to 25 minutes drive from the base. The personal hazard of commuting is indeed serious and must be seen to be fully appreciated.

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7. Visit with [REDACTED] I visited with [REDACTED] and discussed the following items:

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a. I told him the probability is that the unit will remain [REDACTED] and the project will be funded through December 1959.

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b. I discussed the desirability from an operations, support and security point of view of remaining [REDACTED] and perhaps staging from other bases for tactical missions. [REDACTED] was most relieved to hear this and advised that he felt tactical missions should not be launched or recovered [REDACTED]

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c. I briefed him generally on project activities and on the panel now meeting to recommend follow-on equipment.

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d. I asked [REDACTED] whether or not any major problems had been generated by the continued operation of Detachment C from [REDACTED] and he advised that other than the misgiving with regard to launching missions from [REDACTED] no serious problems existed, and that he felt relations between the unit and the Agency support group [REDACTED] were good.

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